



SCHOOL BUS, INC.

5100 W. 8th Street • Sioux Falls, SD 57107 • (605) 334-6644 • Fax (605) 334-4245

Steven C. Hey, President
Jim W. Shafer, Manager

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION "POINT OF CONTACT" **APRIL NEWSLETTER**

Question

Q. What is the law regarding removal of wheelchair trays during transport?

A. There is no federal law that addresses whether trays or other accessories must be removed during transport of an occupied wheelchair. Some states have guidelines on the issue, but others leave it up to the transporter or school board.

If your state does not offer guidance, you may want to develop a policy in cooperation with the district's special education department that would be applied consistently to all passengers. You could use another state's policy as a basis, adapting it to your needs. (Florida is one state that has guidelines on these issues.)

Most experts recommend removing the tray and other accessories that could harm the student in a crash or sudden maneuver. Remember that anything you remove must be secured during transport.

Let's stop stranding kids on the bus

In the past few months, news sources across the nation have reported an alarming number of incidents of children left on school buses. To help raise awareness of this persistent problem, Transportation Consultant Dick Fischer has distributed a poster for school bus professionals to use at their operations.

For a PDF file of the poster, click on www.schoolbusfleet.com/images/pdf/Strandedchildren.pdf.

State's School Bus Web Site

The following link will take you directly to the State's school bus web site. Please save it and use it frequently. There is a lot of useful information on this site. It also includes past newsletters and soon will have any information concerning the train the trainer sessions and school bus driver training sites and dates for the fall annual training.

<http://www.state.sd.us/deca/OPA/schooltransportation.htm>

HARD TO BELIEVE!

Bus passengers lift rail-crossing arms April 6, 2005 SAVANNAH, Ga.

A school bus driver was fired after four of his passengers got out to raise the gates at a railroad crossing so the bus could pass. According to www.wtoctv.com, an approaching train came within 100 yards of the crossing when the incident occurred Monday. A witness said the conductor was yelling out the window to get the kids out of the way. An official at Laidlaw's local terminal, which provides transportation service for Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools, said the driver had seven years of experience with a clean record. Following the incident, the Laidlaw branch arranged for each of its 300 bus drivers to take a railroad-crossing refresher course.

Anti-Idling Policies and Children's Health

How to Protect Students from Diesel Exhaust

Every school day, more than 24 million children across the United States board a school bus to ride to school. Nearly 90% of these buses are powered by diesel fuel, and exhaust from these buses has been linked to serious health consequences in children. School buses provide a crucial service by transporting children, but it is critical that this service is provided in as safe a manner as possible. Fortunately, the adoption of an anti-idling policy is a simple way to improve the safety of school buses.

School Bus Exhaust

Diesel exhaust contains a variety of pollutants that have been linked to health problems for children. Short-term exposure has been shown to pose respiratory risks such as asthma exacerbation. Long-term exposure is linked to decreased lung function, cardiac disease, cancer, and other serious health problems. Some chemicals in diesel exhaust are also known endocrine disruptors and may play a role in developmental disorders.

Children can be exposed to diesel exhaust both when they are on or near an idling bus. Studies show that particulate matter levels can be four times higher for those on a bus than for those in a car driving in front of the bus. When buses idle, while waiting to pick students up, exhaust levels around the bus and inside the bus rise to dangerous levels. Exhaust can also travel into school buildings if the idling buses are near an entranceway, window, or air intake for the ventilation system.

Reducing Harm from Diesel Exhaust

A number of tools are available to reduce the harm from diesel exhaust. Anti-idling policies are an option that many school districts and school bus fleet manager's find appealing because of the ease of implementation. For no cost (actually often a savings due to reduced fuel consumption) and virtually no extra work, bus fleets can implement anti-idling policies that have a significant impact on children's health. Other options include alternative fuels and diesel retrofits. For more information on these strategies, you can visit www.cleanair.org/dieseldifference/.

For a step-by-step guide to implementing an anti-idling policy, see the following.

Clean Air Council staff can help with this process. Contact the Council at 215-567-4004 with any questions.

- 1) Look at the sample policy that the Council has produced. It can be found at www.cleanair.org/Transportation/idling/modelpolicy.htm. This document outlines the various options that are available. They range from simply defining a maximum idling time (such as 5 minutes) to adjusting bus parking and departure schedules. Use these as a guideline to draft a policy.
- 2) Decide how to implement the policy. Working with the school district and having it pass a formal School Board Resolution can be a powerful tool. Alternatively, simply adding a rule to the driver handbook can be the fastest way to implement a basic anti-idling policy.
- 3) Publicize the policy. Make sure that drivers know about the new policy. Signs should be placed in visible locations to remind drivers that idling is prohibited. Also, publicize the changes to the public. A press release can be a great way to generate good press in the community.

4) Be available to answer questions. Drivers will probably have questions about the new policy and how it affects them. To ensure successful implementation, make sure that drivers have the information they need. Remember, Clean Air Council staff can help by talking to drivers about the importance of reducing idling.

Anti-Idling Facts

More than 24 million children in the United States ride a bus to and from school every school day.

Diesel engines emit more than 75% of all the fine particulate from vehicles in the United States.

Idling wastes fuel and money.

Idling is harder on diesel engines than restarting or driving.

Modern diesel engines do not need to be warmed up more than the manufactures' recommended time (usually 5 minutes) except in extremely cold conditions.

SPECIALTY MANUFACTURING CO. SURVEY

A division of The Ellison Company, Inc.
Stop Arm Survey

Dear Transportation Professional:

To help us update and produce safety products that meet the needs of our school bus users, we are asking if you would take a few minutes to fill out the short stop arm survey below. This input is valuable to us when we assess the products we have out in the field. It also gives us the information we need to design updated products that suit your needs and desires.

We appreciate your participation and will give serious consideration to any responses. This survey is confidential and will only be used for product assessment and design purposes. We have included a SASE to return the survey to Specialty Manufacturing, and would appreciate a quick response if this is possible.

1. What, in your opinion, does the stop arm NOT do that you wish it would do?
2. Briefly, give us your opinion of the stop arms on the buses in your state.
3. What problems, if any, have come up with the stop arms on your buses?
4. In terms of design, operations and maintenance, what would you change about the school bus stop arms?
5. Please give us any additional comments

P.O. Box 790 ú 10200 Pineville Road ú Pineville, NC 28134 (704) 889-7518 ú Fax (704) 889-2760
www.specmfg.com